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QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

Progress report of the Secretary-General

1. In my last progress report (A/43/588), dated 13 September 1988, I informed the General Assembly of the status of my efforts to facilitate a comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor. In this connection, I reported that Indonesia and Portugal had agreed in principle that a delegation from the Portuguese Parliament would undertake a visit to East Timor in order to obtain first-hand information on the situation, subject to the elaboration of mutually acceptable terms of reference. I further reported that they had agreed to resume their contacts under my auspices, with a view to reaching agreement on the indispensable terms and modalities and the timing for a proposed visit of a delegation from the Portuguese Parliament to the territory.

2. Since then, I and Under-Secretary-General Rafeeuddin Ahmed, who has been assisting me in these endeavours, have continued our consultations with the two Governments. I have had the opportunity on separate occasions to discuss the situation with President Suharto of Indonesia and with President Soares of Portugal. I also had occasion to discuss the question with Prime Minister Cavaco Silva and Foreign Minister Pinheiro of Portugal as well as with Foreign Minister Alatas of Indonesia. In the course of these discussions, I obtained the reaffirmation from both sides of their commitment to achieving a comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor.

3. The substantive talks between Indonesia and Portugal were formally resumed at a meeting held in my presence on 9 May 1989. At that meeting, I urged the two sides to conclude their duscussions successfully and in a timely manner. Three more rounds of substantive talks were subsequently held.

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* A/44/150.

4. I am confident that progress can continue to be made through the substantive talks. While it may be regrettable that the pace of progress has not been constant, I am encouraged by the increased frequency of discussions between the two sides in recent months. These talks are being conducted in a constructive atmosphere and in a serious manner. It is my hope that the remaining matters relating to a visit to the territory by a delegation from the Portuguese Parliament will be resolved in the near future. I continue to believe that such a visit could help to create an atmosphere conducive to achieving a comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution.